

# INSTALLATION COMMANDER'S PROCLAMATION

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To the Entire United States Army Garrison, Bamberg Community

I am issuing this proclamation in support of Child Abuse Prevention Month in the Army, April 2006. The most recent Department of Army report on Child Fatalities teaches us a great deal about preventable child deaths. The report is a sobering reminder of the need for an effective, Installation-wide response.

- We need to **recognize** child abuse and the dangerous circumstances that can lead to a child's death.
- We need to **respond** to what we see and know, keeping the safety of our children uppermost in our minds.
- We need to **report** all forms of child abuse: situations of child neglect can lead to child deaths.

Building stronger links to the civilian community is another important factor. The report on child fatalities shows that all too often, child abuse incidents that were identified off post were not reported to military authorities who could have offered intervention services.

Family stress and family dysfunction are deep concerns. For instance, 56% of the adults involved in Army child abuse fatalities had substance abuse and/or behavioral health issues. In six child fatality cases, death occurred while the Soldier was deployed. Two fatalities were identified as possible shaken baby syndrome cases. Three fatalities were directly attributed to post partum depression.

Our smallest children are the greatest victims. In fact, 76% of all child abuse fatalities involved children under the age of three.

We must dedicate ourselves to preventing these tragedies. We must commit ourselves to protect our children, and keep them safe. What does it take?

- Pay attention to the early warning signs.
- Reach out to families under stress.
- Mobilize the whole community, both on post and off.
- Know what services and programs are available.
- Recognize, Respond, and Report Child Abuse and Neglect

For information and support in preventing child fatalities, contact the Family Advocacy Program. They can help.

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Commanding